

05

(12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 297 186 (13) A

(43) Date of A Publication 24.07.1996

(21) Application No 9501030.2

(22) Date of Filing 19.01.1995

(71) Applicant(s)

John Michael Richards  
Spike Lodge, The Street, East Preston,  
LITTLEHAMPTON, BN16 1JL, United Kingdom

(72) Inventor(s)

John Michael Richards

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service

G F Redfern & Co  
Redfern House, 149/151 Tarring Road, WORTHING,  
West Sussex, BN11 4HE, United Kingdom

(51) INT CL<sup>6</sup>

G09B 17/02

(52) UK CL (Edition O )

G5G G17 G5P

(56) Documents Cited

GB 2235081 A GB 2193830 A

(58) Field of Search

UK CL (Edition O ) G5G G17

INT CL<sup>6</sup> G09B 17/00 17/02

Online:WPI

(54) Teaching aid

(57) There is described a teaching aid comprising at least two substantially coplanar masking elements (1, 2), each of which defines at least one edge of a viewing window (G), the masking elements (1, 2) being linked together in such a way as to be movable in their plane towards and away from each other in order to vary at least one dimension of the viewing window. In a preferred embodiment, the two masking elements (1, 2) are mounted to the respective first ends of a pair of elongate levers (4,5), the other ends of the levers being connected together and the levers being resiliently-biased to urge their first ends away from each other. The device is particularly useful for assisting in the learning of reading.

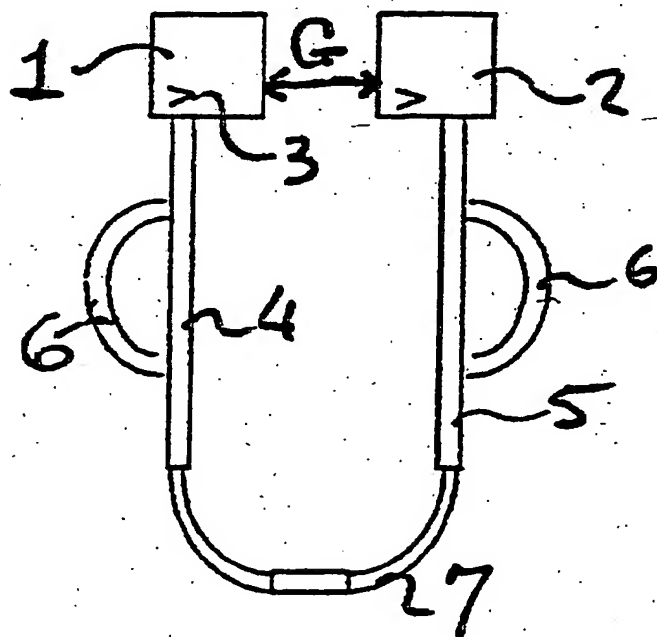


FIG 1

**THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)**

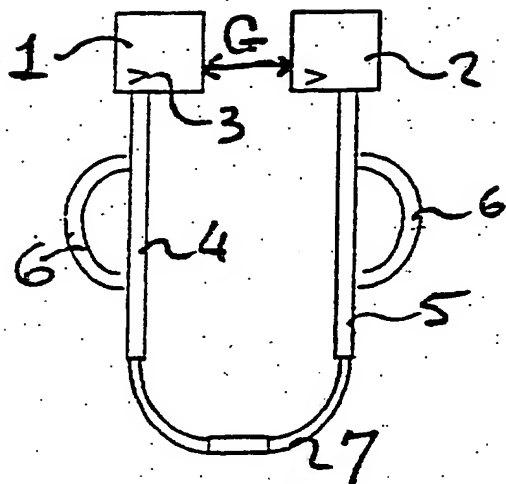


FIG 1

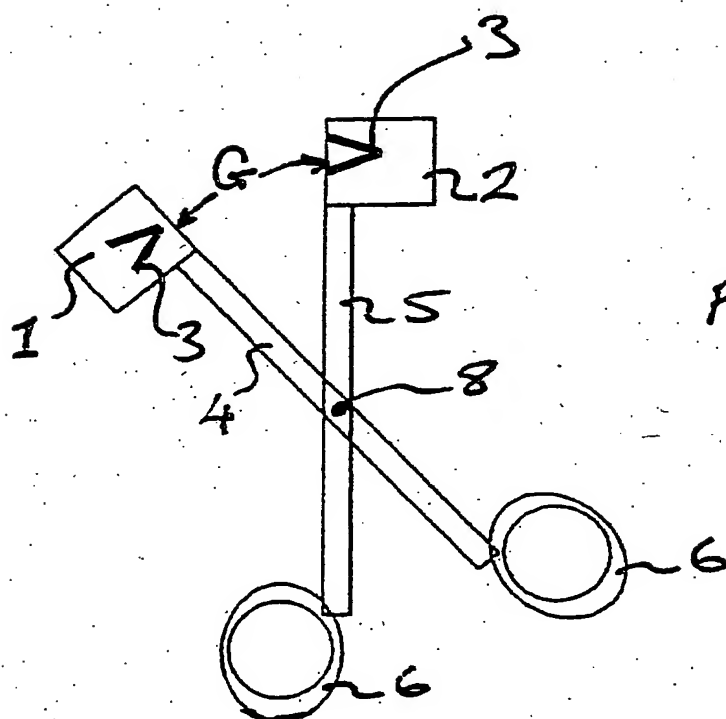


FIG 2

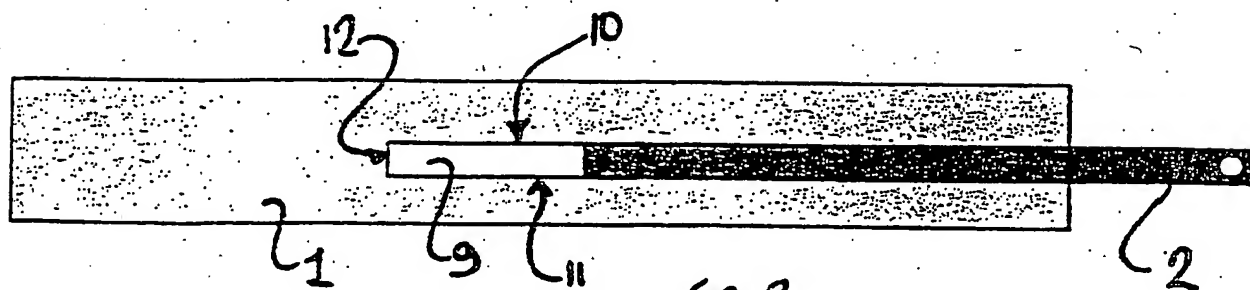


FIG 3

**THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)**

TEACHING AID

The present invention relates to teaching aids, and is particularly concerned with a device for assisting in the learning of reading.

When reading is being taught, it is often encouraging for the pupil to point at words which are recognised. Teachers assisting the pupil often follow the words with a pointer or finger in order to emphasise the correct reading direction and to focus attention at the point to which progress has been made. It is also common practice to place a straight edge or ruler in such a position that the line of words to be read appears adjacent the straight edge.

When longer words are encountered, it is often advantageous for the pupil if these can be broken up into pronounceable syllables. To achieve this, it is the teacher's aim to obscure parts of the longer word in order to focus attention on particular syllables in sequence. However, when this is done using the teacher's fingers, it is extremely difficult not to obscure more of the text than is required to be covered. The teacher's hands and/or forearms often obscure parts of the text which the pupil is intended to be reading.

An objective of the present invention is to provide a teaching aid which is simple in use, and can accurately obscure parts of a written text in order to focus a pupil's attention on particular words or syllables.

Recent research has also indicated that learning can be assisted in certain cases by viewing a text through a coloured filter. This is particularly beneficial in cases of learning difficulties in children and accordingly a secondary objective of the present invention is to provide a tinted filter which can be used to focus a pupil's attention on particular parts of a text.

According to the present invention, a teaching aid comprises at least two substantially coplanar masking elements, each of which defines at least one edge of a viewing window, the masking elements being linked together in such a way as to be movable in their plane towards and away from each other in order to vary at least one dimension of the viewing window.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the two masking elements are mounted to the respective ends of a pair of levers, the other ends of the levers being connected together and the levers being resiliently biased away from each other.

In an alternative embodiment, the masking elements are mounted at the respective first ends of a pair of crossed lever arms, the second ends of the lever arms being provided with gripping rings. The apparatus of this embodiment generally resembles a pair of scissors.

In a third embodiment, there is provided a first masking element having an elongated aperture formed therein, the second masking element being slidably received for longitudinal motion along the aperture in the first masking element, the viewing window being defined between an end of the second masking element, and the sides and an end of aperture in the first masking element.

Embodiments of the invention will now be described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a first embodiment of the teaching aid of the present invention, in plan view;

Figure 2 is a schematic plan view of a second embodiment of the invention; and

Figure 3 is a schematic view of a third embodiment of the invention.

Referring now to Figure 1, the teaching aid comprises first and second masking elements 1 and 2 of generally rectangular configuration. The masking elements may be opaque, or may be tinted. Indicia such as arrow heads 3 may be applied to the masking elements to emphasise the reading direction to the pupil.

Each of the masking elements 1 and 2 is fixed to a first end of a respective lever arm 4 and 5, each lever arm being formed with a generally semi-circular handle portion 6. The ends of the lever arms 4 and 5 remote from the masking elements 1 and 2 are connected by a resilient 'U' shaped link 7, which is so arranged that in its unstressed condition a gap G exists between the adjacent edges of the masking elements 1 and 2.

In use, the teacher holds the reading aid by its handles 6, and by exerting inward pressure on the lever arms 4 and 5 can vary the width of the gap G against the resilient bias of the link 7. The teacher can thus place the masking elements 1 and 2 on the page of text to be read, and adjust the gap G so that the word or syllable on which the pupil's attention is to be focused will appear in the gap G between the masking elements 1 and 2.

Referring now to Figure 2 an alternative embodiment of the device is shown wherein masking elements 1 and 2, having thereon indicia 3 indicating the reading direction, are mounted at the first ends of a respective pair of levers 4 and 5, the levers 4 and 5 being joined at their central points by a pivot 8. Ring-like handles 6 are provided at the ends of the lever arms 4 and 5 remote from the masking elements 1.

In use, the teaching aid shown in Figure 2 is gripped in the manner of a pair of scissors, and is positioned over the page of text such that the word or syllable on which the pupil's attention is to be focused lies between the adjacent edges of the masking elements 1 and 2. The width of the gap G between the masking elements is adjusted by varying the spacing of the finger rings 6.

Figure 3 shows a further embodiment of the invention, wherein a first masking element 1 of elongate form is provided with a longitudinal slot 9 extending from one end of the masking element 1 to a point intermediate its length. The slot 9 has parallel longitudinal side surfaces 10 and 11, and a transversely extending end surface 12.

A second elongate masking element 2 is provided, the width of the masking element 2 being such that it can be closely received within the slot 9 of the masking element 1, the side faces of the masking element 2 and sides 10 and 11 of the slot 9 being preferably formed with cooperating formations to retain the masking element 2 within the slot 9, allowing relative longitudinal sliding motion between the masking elements 1 and 2.

In use, the teaching aid of Figure 3 is placed on a page of text in such a position that the word or syllable on which attention is to be focused appears visible through the slot 9, between the end

surface of the masking element 2 and the end 12 of the slot 9. The length of the viewing window may be varied by sliding the masking element 2 relative to the masking element 1 to bring the end face of the masking element 2 closer to or further away from the end face 12 of the slot 9.

In all the above embodiments, the masking elements 1 and 2 may be opaque or may be transparent or tinted. Indicia may be placed on the masking elements to indicate the reading direction.

In a further development of the invention, not shown, the masking elements 1 and 2 may be made opaque or may be transparent and/or tinted in a first colour, while the viewing window between the masking elements is covered by a transparent filter tinted in a second colour.

In yet a further development, one or more lenses or other optical devices may be provided to magnify the text shown in the viewing window or appearing between the masking elements 1 and 2.

The masking elements 1 and 2 need not be rectangular in form as is shown in Figures 1 and 2. The masking elements may be of 'L' configuration, and may be overlapped to form a generally rectangular window which may be adjusted in width and height by relative movement of the two masking elements. The masking elements may further take the form of sheets of transparent or tinted material on which opaque areas are formed to act as masking elements, two such sheets being superimposed and movable relatively to each other so that their respective opaque areas each define one or more sides of a viewing window, the text being viewed through tinted or transparent areas between the opaque parts of the sheets.



CLAIMS

1. A teaching aid comprising at least two substantially coplanar masking elements, each of which defines at least one edge of a viewing window, the masking elements being linked together in such a way as to be movable in their plane towards and away from each other in order to vary at least one dimension of the viewing window.
2. A teaching aid according to claim 1, wherein the two masking elements are mounted to the respective first ends of a pair of elongate levers, the other ends of the levers being connected together and the levers being resiliently biased to urge their first ends away from each other.
3. A teaching aid according to claim 1, wherein the masking elements are mounted at the respective first ends of a pair of crossed lever arms, the arms being pivotally connected together at their respective midregions, and second ends of the lever arms being provided with gripping rings.
4. A teaching aid according to claim 1, comprising the first masking element has an elongated aperture formed therein, the second masking element is slidably received for longitudinal motion along the aperture in the first masking element, the viewing window being defined between an end of the second masking element, and the sides and an end of aperture in the first masking element.
5. A teaching aid according to any preceding claim, wherein the masking elements are opaque or tinted.
6. A teaching aid according to any preceding claim, wherein indicia are placed on the masking elements to indicate the reading direction.
7. A teaching aid according to any preceding claim, wherein the masking elements are tinted in a first colour, while the viewing window between the masking elements is covered by a filter tinted in a second colour.
8. A teaching aid according to any of claims 1 to 7, wherein the masking elements are opaque, while the viewing window between the masking elements is covered by a transparent or coloured filter.

9. A teaching aid according to any preceding claim, wherein one or more lenses or other optical devices are provided to magnify the text shown in the viewing window.
10. A teaching aid according to any preceding claim, wherein the masking elements are of 'L'-shaped configuration, and are overlapped to define a generally rectangular window which may be adjusted in width and height by relative movement of the two masking elements.
11. A teaching aid substantially as described herein, with reference to Figure 1, Figure 2 or Figure 3 of the accompanying drawings.

7

**Patents Act 1977**  
**Examiner's report to the Comptroller under Section 17**  
**(The Search report)**

Application number  
 GB 9501030.2

**Relevant Technical Fields**

- (i) UK Cl (Ed.O) G5G (G17)  
 (ii) Int Cl (Ed.6) G09B 17/00, 17/02

Search Examiner  
 P A MAKIN

Date of completion of Search  
 30 JANUARY 1996

**Databases (see below)**

(i) UK Patent Office collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications.

Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of Claims :-  
 1-11

(ii) ONLINE: WPI

**Categories of documents**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>X:</b> Document indicating lack of novelty or of inventive step.</p> <p><b>Y:</b> Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of the same category.</p> <p><b>A:</b> Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.</p> | <p><b>P:</b> Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of the present application.</p> <p><b>E:</b> Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of the present application.</p> <p><b>&amp;:</b> Member of the same patent family; corresponding document.</p> |
|--|---|

Category	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)
X	GB 2235081 A (KYRLE) whole document	1, 4
X	GB 2193830 A (GABAY) whole document	1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9

Databases: The UK Patent Office database comprises classified collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications as outlined periodically in the Official Journal (Patents). The on-line databases considered for search are also listed periodically in the Official Journal (Patents).

**THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)**